

# ***The Electric Mercury***

**U.S. Army Medical Command Electronic News Summary, June 2000**

**For more on these and other important stories, see June 2000 printed issue of The Mercury.  
This is a service of the Public Affairs Office, Headquarters MEDCOM.**

## **Blanck to retire June 30**

After 32 years of military medical service, LTG Ronald R. Blanck – Surgeon General of the Army and commanding general of the U.S. Army Medical Command – will retire June 30. He will become president of the University of North Texas Health Science Center in Fort Worth. (Accompanied by sidebar articles describing Blanck's Army career and his recent selection as one of only about 400 "masters" in the 116,000-member American College of Physicians-American Society of Internal Medicine.)

## **MEDCOM's CSM concludes 35 years of service**

CSM Walter R. Scott, command sergeant major of Medical Command, will retire on Sept. 30 after 35 years of service. In a final interview with the Mercury, he discusses topics ranging from the qualities required of a MEDCOM command sergeant major to the message he would convey if he could talk to all the soldiers in the Army.

## **Nurse Corps chief among new generals**

BG William T. Bester has been appointed chief of the Army Nurse Corps, the first male to hold that position. He also becomes assistant surgeon general for force projection, replacing MG Kevin C. Kiley who takes over as commander of the AMEDD Center and School. A new assignment has not yet been announced for recently promoted MG Darrel R. Porr, commander of Southeast Regional Medical Command and Eisenhower Army Medical Center. COL(P) Richard L. Ursone was nominated for promotion to brigadier general and assignment as commander of Europe Regional Medical Command. (Since the Mercury went to press, Ursone's promotion has taken place.)

## **Medical priority must be quality care...**

### **Leaders become guideline champions**

In the wake of a headline-making report that medical mistakes kill up to 98,000 Americans a year, The Mercury introduces a quality-of-care series that describes how Army Medicine works to avoid such tragedies. In the first article, a quality assurance official describes the MEDCOM's development and use of clinical practice guidelines.

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Other important stories in the June Mercury include:

- The Army is about people who share a common set of values, writes LTG Ronald Blanck in his final column as MEDCOM commander. Admitting that he did not initially plan an Army career, he writes that those people and their spirit of selfless service, along with the Army's challenging and interesting jobs, are why he stayed in the military.
- Medical units in Bosnia and Kosovo undergo another rotation, as departing units turn over Task Force Med Eagle and Task Force Falcon medical duties to new arrivals.
- "Defense briefs" summary carries items about TRICARE Region 1 appointing an ombudsman, a long-term anthrax study, expanded availability of information on anthrax vaccinations, a money-saving pharmacy program, and soldiers' engineering and medical projects in El Salvador.
- Mercury launches "Medics of the Coldest War" series to honor Army medical personnel who served in the Korean conflict. Opener summarizes the background of the war and shocking setbacks suffered by South Korean and U.S. forces in the early days.
- Texas Army National Guard MSG Ricardo Andrade is named noncommissioned officer in charge of the team developing the 91W health-care specialist MOS (military occupational specialty).
- With a 20-person staff of health-care, communications and technology experts, the Center for Total Access at Fort Gordon, Ga., serves as a laboratory to develop ways to insert new technology into the military health-care system.
- CPT Leonard Gruppo Jr. receives the 2000 Surgeon General's Physician Assistant Recognition Award and is named Army Physician Assistant of the Year.
- LTC Joann E. Hollandsworth, chief of community health nursing at Tripler Army Medical Center, Hawaii, earns Retired Army Nurse Corps Association award for achievements in pushing preventive services beyond walls of hospital into community.
- Horse-interaction program started by a Womack Army Medical Center educator makes real difference in the physical and mental development of disabled children.
- Army pediatrician warns parents to supervise children's television viewing to avoid potential harm from inappropriate information and ideas.
- Commentary by 1LT James S. Williams calls for all medics to wear the Red Cross and for all units to strictly obey the rules against using medical personnel for any non-medical tasks, in order to safeguard medics' special status under the Geneva Convention.